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SERVICE

NEWS

ISSUED FOR THE STAFF OF THE SOIL CONSERVATION
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April 9, 1941

No. 14



Last issue, your correspondent discussed efficiency ratings and promised to tell you how one rating officer fell into an easy error which he afterwards regretted.

His name was John Doe. He was a good man and he tried to be honest and conscientious in dealing with his subordinates. When the time came to make efficiency ratings, he devoted considerable thought to the job because he realized its importance.

John Doe's secretary, Miss Roe (CAF-5), was a fast stenographer and a generally efficient girl who took the whole responsibility for running his office. She answered routine letters, prepared travel vouchers, ordered supplies, and devised a file system, all on her own initiative. The other stenographer in his office was named Miss Poe (CAF-2). She was capable but she was not as quick in her work as Miss Roe. She assumed little responsibility and rarely made decisions, as long as Miss Roe was in the office. She left most of the really difficult work to Miss Roe. As Doe often said, he would rather have one of Miss Roe than three of Miss Poe.

There was no doubt in Doe's honest mind as he weighed these considerations and rated Miss Roe "excellent"; he thought he

was generous, if anything, in rating Miss Poe "good".

QUESTION: Was John Doe as fair in his ratings as he believed he was?

The answer is no. Doe made his mistake in overlooking the fact that Miss Roe was classified three grades higher than Miss Poe. Indeed, when compared with other CAF-5's and considering the high quality of performance expected of people in that grade, Miss Roe was entitled to little more than "good". On the other hand, in comparison with other CAF-2's Miss Poe was a remarkably capable employee; in her grade people cannot be expected to assume responsibility and take a great deal of initiative.

John Doe realized his error when his office had to make a budget reduction. Miss Poe ranked low on the CAF-2 separation register and had to be dismissed. She was replaced by a less able CAF-2 stenographer from another office, who had been rated as a CAF-2. Doe also learned to his dismay that another Grade CAF-5 secretary in the office, admittedly more competent than Miss Roe, was terminated because her employer had rated her properly and not on a basis of comparison with a CAF-2 employee.

This kind of mistake is not unusual. A study of efficiency ratings in the Department of Agriculture last year showed that among P-5 employees, 55% rated "excellent", but among P-2 employees, only 25% rated so high. And 51% of CAF-5 em-

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SCS CAMPS CELEBRATE 8TH BIRTHDAY OF CCC

Hundreds of SCS-CCC camps threw open their doors to the public this past week in honor of the eighth birthday of the CCC. The open-house celebrations gave thousands of people the opportunity of viewing CCC camps at close range and of learning more about the work program of the Corps.

The eighth birthday of the CCC is the seventh in terms of SCS participation. First allotment of SCS camps was made in April 1934, when 22 camps were assigned to the Soil Erosion Service. The SCS now supervises 386 camps.

SCS-CCC camps have engaged in soil conservation work in 758 localities throughout the United States since 1934. Camp agreements cover more than 20,000,000 acres. Approximately a third of a million different CCC enrollees through their experience in camps have left with a knowledge of the soil conservation problems and the need for a nation-wide erosion control program.

Since the development of the soil conservation districts' program, CCC camps through the medium of districts have been able to spread the benefits of camp work to greater numbers of cooperators farming larger aggregate areas. Districts, in turn, insure that the work of the camps will be carried on by the landowners. At the present time 139 camps are cooperating with soil conservation districts.

CCC camps have been a right arm of the soil conservation program, the front line troops of the Soil Conservation Service in its war on erosion. Their aid has been in part responsible for the momentum which has taken the soil conservation movement into the hills and valleys of the Nation.

In other branches of the national conservation program, the CCC has played
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SC AGREEMENTS FOR LAND BANK FARMS

From another quarter comes news of the close coordination of activities of the Farm Credit Administration and the SCS. Instructions urging the maintenance of soil conservation agreements on farms sold by the Land Banks to private individuals were recently issued by P. N. Johnson, vice-president of the Federal Land Bank at St. Paul, Minn. In his instructions, Mr. Johnson states:

"Cooperative Agreements with the Soil Conservation Service, CCC Erosion Projects, Soil Conservation Districts, and the United States Forestry Service have already been executed on a number of Bank and Corporation owned farms. It is contemplated that a substantial number of additional agreements will be negotiated.

"In many cases farms will be sold before the expiration of these agreements. While provision has been made to provide for a cancellation in the event of sale, it is extremely desirable that these agreements be permitted to remain in force and that the corrective measures be performed on each farm.

"In order that the intent of the arrangement be carried out, it is desired that each agreement that is in effect be discussed with the prospective purchaser. Before submitting an offer, the prospective purchaser should agree to assume the Bank's responsibility under the agreement, or agree to enter into a supplemental agreement that is acceptable to the Soil Conservation Service or any other interested agency.

"Real Estate fieldmen should obtain a list of properties covered by such agreements from the servicing Secretary-Treasurer.

"Your close cooperation will be appreciated."

C-MEN WORK AT DEFENSE BY DAY AND BY NIGHT

Twenty-seven enrollees at the Paris, Ill., CCC camp are literally working at defense day and night. During the day they help the Soil Conservation Service and cooperating farmers defend their soil against erosion. At night they are busy in local shops learning trades essential in the national defense program.

Sixteen of the enrollees are developing skill in electrical wiring at a battery company, and 11 are learning the theories and practices of metal work at a local metal shop. The courses are offered as a part of the national defense training program to increase the number of skilled workers. Federal funds pay for instruction and equipment used in the training classes.

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

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ployees were "excellent", while only 18% of CAF-2's were in that bracket.

Does that mean that P-5's and CAF-5's do their jobs so much better than P-2's and CAF-2's? Or does it mean that P-5's and CAF-5's are generally more able than the lower grade personnel? That doesn't seem likely. It's a much sounder conclusion that too many supervisors have, unconsciously or not, been inclined to rate their employees on the basis of general performance rather than on performance of the job assigned.

So, friend supervisor, when you're rating us subordinates don't compare P-2's with P-5's or CAF-2's with CAF-5's. Only employees at the same level of responsibility can be compared with fairness.

Read the efficiency rating manual carefully. It will help you do the just and conscientious kind of rating job we know you want to do.

MCENTEE CONGRATULATES SCS ON SAFETY RECORD

Harold C. Mesch and his Safety Section personnel are mighty pleased with the record they made in 1940 which placed SCS with the lowest accident frequency rate of any of the cooperating agencies in the Civilian Conservation Corps. J. J. McEntee, director of the CCC, has written to H. D. Abbot, Assistant Chief in Charge of CCC Operations, to offer the congratulations of the Civilian Conservation Corps for this splendid record. Says Mr. McEntee in his letter:

"I am glad to note that for the calendar year 1940, the Soil Conservation Service had the lowest accident frequency rate of any of the cooperating agencies in the Civilian Conservation Corps. It is also noted that your Service had the lowest rate in 1939; the second lowest in 1938; the third lowest in 1937; and the second lowest in 1936.... Please extend my heartiest congratulations to all concerned for this worthy display of leadership in accident reduction."

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Fame of the SCS film, "This Heritage We Guard," has spread as far as Africa. The Kenya Colony Department of Agriculture has asked to purchase four copies of the picture.

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The Fenton (Mich.) Soil Conservation District arranged two forest-tree-planting schools late in March. Michigan State College extension forester helped conduct the schools. District conservationist is R. C. Behymer.

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"Fences That Hold the Soil," by F. E. Charles, Region 3 information specialist, is scheduled for early appearance in Successful Farming.

HERE'S NEWS ABOUT THE RAMSPECK ACT

The President is expected soon to sign an executive order putting the Ramspeck Act in operation. The Act provides for blanketing many thousands of Federal employees into the Civil Service. The order is reported to have been held up in the Justice Department while certain legal points were clarified.

SCS has about 1500 LU and CCC employees who do not now have civil service status and who will be affected by the Act, according to an estimate submitted by the Chief to the Director of Personnel. Dr. Bennett indicated his wholehearted support of any action to apply the Act to this Service at an early date.

While many details of the procedure for covering jobs under civil service have not been worked out, certain decisions on interpretations of the Act have been made by Civil Service Commission. Here are the decisions recently made by the Commission:

1. To be eligible, incumbent must be in an active duty status on the date his position is brought into the classified service. No person on leave without pay or on furlough on that specific date will be eligible.

2. Acquisition of a classified status will be governed by the degree of permanency of the position. If the position is permanent, the incumbent if otherwise eligible will acquire status regardless of the particular terms of his appointment.

3. The six months of satisfactory service prior to coverage-in has been construed by the commission as service in an active duty status. A person who has been in a furlough or leave-without-pay status in excess of 30 days during the six months immediately prior to classification of the position will not be eligible.

4. In computing the six-month satisfactory service period, all civilian service in any branch of the Federal Government--legislative, judicial and the District Government--will be credited.

5. Department and agency heads cannot be required to recommend any incumbents for classification. Those not recommended will be permitted to stay in their posts without obtaining a civil service status. Separation will be required of these persons only if they fail the non-competitive examinations required by the act.

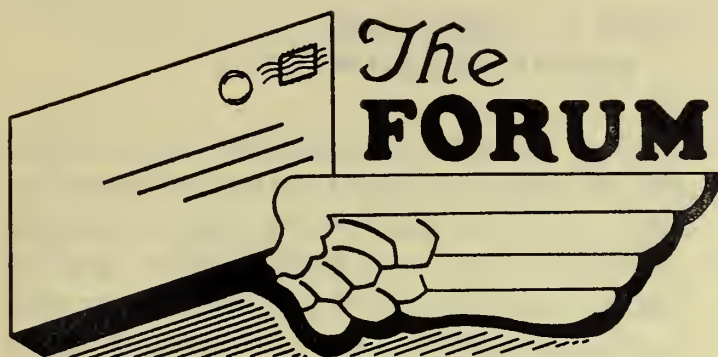
6. The commission will prescribe non-competitive examinations including (1) the customary written examination or rating of education and experience; (2) a physical examination in which an employee must show ability to perform his duties satisfactorily without constituting an employment hazard to himself or others. Persons with remediable physical defects will not be disqualified if within six months the defect is remedied; and (3) the employee "will be required to meet reasonable standards of personal suitability."

7. Employees recommended for classification who recently have qualified in a civil service examination will not be required to pass any further written or un-assembled (education and experience) examination.

8. Unclassified laborer positions may be included in the classified service.

9. Administrative positions, salaries of which are paid from the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act in all departments and agencies except Work Projects Administration, may be included in the merit system. The commission defines administrative positions as those the compensation for which is paid (a) from a direct appropriation for administrative expenses; (b) that portion of an allotment for a

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EDITOR, SERVICE NEWS: I'm afraid, and I do mean afraid, that E. L. has hit upon something. The language of some of the district programs and work plans is beautiful to behold, even if you can't understand some of the words. (I've heard them give \$64 for definitions of simpler ones on the quiz programs!) Either the scientific jargon is as infectious and catching as the measles, so that district supervisors need be exposed to it only once or twice in order to reproduce it glibly without pain, or else there are a lot of ghost writers in the house.

Whatever the case, they should be ashamed!

"Arborescent vegetation" indeed!

J. F.

EDITOR, SERVICE NEWS: I have read with a great deal of interest, the Service News, Issue No. 11, of February 28, 1941. I was indeed glad to know that the Soil Conservation Service had been designated as a National Defense agency.

In your outline you stated that space was not sufficient to print all of the major reasons why the program of the Soil Conservation Service is essential to total defense but you did list some of the more important reasons why SCS was put on the Defense Agency list. I have read each reason carefully and in my opinion, you have left out the most important one of all. Since you stated that the Forum would welcome letters of comment on these points, here is mine:

"The Soil Conservation Service, through local soil conservation districts and in cooperation with other agencies, is MAKING OUR LAND WORTH DEFENDING. If erosion continues to take the same toll that it has in the past, it would soon be useless to develop planes, warships, armies, navies, etc., to defend America because there is no need for defending something that has become useless and of no value. As value increases, we stand more on guard to see that the item is protected.

"It seems to me that our big job is to make America worth defending."

M. T.

- O -

Three small-town dailies and weeklies in Indiana recently called on the SCS for assistance with special farm editions. J. D. Parsons, area conservationist, and his staff of the North Indiana Area, Logansport, helped out, while erosion control copy was prepared by regional office writers--Ewing Jones and Hal Jenkins. S. E. Bowman, district conservationist, made arrangements with the Marion Chronicle Tribune, and George Eikenberry, another district conservationist, worked with the Akron News on special farm issues. Farm edition copy also was requested by the Lafayette Journal-Courier.

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As soon as Region 3's South Muskegon Soil Conservation District was organized, a tree nursery was established in the district. Last year the County Board of Supervisors (Michigan's name for county commissioners) appropriated \$1,000 for nursery work in the district; this year \$1,500 was appropriated. Last fall the first seedlings from this nursery were sold to district cooperators. At the present the nursery has approximately three million pine seedlings, and the district expects to plant enough seed this spring to make an additional two million seedlings.

MANIFOLD AND HOLT TELL OF THEIR TRAVELS

C. B. Manifold and E. G. Holt, who have recently returned from trips to Central and South America in the interest of science, recounted some of the highlights of their experiences for the benefit of the Washington staff at a meeting in the USDA auditorium on April 4. Mr. Manifold used lantern slides to illustrate his talk; Mr. Holt had to depend on the spoken word for descriptions since his pictures are still enroute from South America.

As a member of a party of agricultural experts sent to Central and South America in search of possible sites for rubber development, Mr. Manifold visited northern Brazil, Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. Mr. Holt spent approximately seven months in southeastern Brazil investigating the possible part that birds may play in the dissemination of jungle yellow fever. He also spent some time in northeastern Brazil and Venezuela.

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The Chief has been invited to talk to a meeting of district supervisors and farmers at Jacksons' Mill, W. Va., on April 22.

THE RAMSPECK ACT

(Continued from page 4)

project which, under terms of the Relief Act, is available for administrative expenses.

Under the Act, the Commission cannot rule regarding eligibles otherwise than as stated under item one. However, this ruling will perhaps be modified either by a resolution now being considered in Congress or by executive order so that employees who at present are on military furlough may be included in the blanketing order.

New developments in the interpretation and application of the Ramspeck Act will be announced by Personnel Management Division, and printed here when possible.

SENATE VOTES ON APPROPRIATION BILL

The Agricultural Appropriation Bill (H. R. 3735) was approved by the Senate on April 3 with only one item of difference in funds to be used by SCS which must be ironed out in joint House and Senate conference committee. The sum in question is \$178,564 for the Land Utilization Program (Title III funds) which was deducted from the budget estimate when the House acted upon the bill. The Senate recommended that the money be restored; so now it is up to the conferees to decide upon final action regarding this sum. If the Senate action stands, LU funds will coincide with the budget recommendation for \$2,278,239.

The \$5,000,000 additional appropriation for work with districts, which was added to the Budget Estimate for SCS funds by the House, was confirmed by the Senate. This means that for the fiscal year 1942 the SCS regular appropriation (under Public 46 including Operations, Research, Administration and Florida Everglades funds) will be \$25,543,684, an increase of \$6,837,544 over the funds available in 1941. The amounts approved by both Senate and House for farm forestry and water facilities remain the same as recommended by the Bureau of the Budget, in so far as they relate to the work of this Service, namely, \$400,000 for farm forestry and \$500,000 for water facilities. The Senate added \$300,000 to the total of the Cooperative Farm Forestry amount, but, we are informed this is intended to cover a special item not under the jurisdiction of the Soil Conservation Service.

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The Chief is planning to attend the mammoth Dewey Hill tree planting bee at Grand Haven, Michigan on April 19, when the entire county will assist in planting some 83,000 red and Scotch pines on an 80-acre sand dune that is threatening to choke the harbor.

WICKARD REAPPOINTS GRASSLAND COMMITTEE

Secretary Wickard has reappointed the Department's Grassland Committee for another year because of the response to the regional conferences held last year and requests for assistance in meetings scheduled for this year. Four meetings--North-east, Southeast, North Central Plains, and Colorado--already are planned. C. R. Enlow is the SCS representative on the committee.

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Promotion of hemispheric solidarity through organization of the farm youth of the two Americas in groups similar to our 4-H Clubs will be the purpose of a motion picture which the Extension Service hopes to produce this year. Material which could be used in such a film is being shot in Cuba as a by-product of the filming of a movie short of the annual conference of the Cuban 4-C Clubs at Colon, Cuba. The 4-C Clubs are the Cuban counterpart of the American 4-H Clubs.

When completed, the larger film will pictorialize the activities of all existing farm youth organizations in this hemisphere, namely, the 4-H Clubs of the United States and Puerto Rico, the 5-V's of Venezuela, the 4-C's of Cuba, and probably the Boys and Girls Farm Clubs in Canada.

8TH BIRTHDAY OF CCC

(Continued from page 2)

similar roles. As Chief Bennett has said, "Possibly this generation will never fully appreciate what the CCC is doing to build the internal strength of America. So many things of immediate magnitude are taking place every day, that we are likely to overlook some of the long-time gains being made. But the CCC is making history, and as history is written in the future it will record that in the 1930's and 1940's the CCC made an invaluable contribution to the conservation of America's most vital resource--the soil."

FIELD MEMORANDA

- 991 Proper Identification of District and Federal Accounts.
- 904-I Military Training and Service Leave. (Digest of annual and military leave status of employees entering any branch of the Military or Naval Service of the United States.)
- 992 Simplification of Expendable Property Record Procedure.
- 993 Simplification of Survey Procedure on Lost, Stolen or Damaged Property.
- 994 Leave Without Pay to Engage in Employment Outside the Federal Government. (Employees who desire to accept outside employment will be expected to resign from the Service. Does not apply to l.w.o.p. for educational purposes.)
- 953-A Deduction for Quarters in CCC Camps. (Clarifies existing instructions regarding deductions for quarters for 23th and 29th of February and for the 31st day of 31-day months.)
- 995 Travel by Privately-owned Automobile. (Repayment of mileage for use of a privately-owned automobile not the property of the traveler.)
- 996 Staggering of Working Hours in the District of Columbia. (Instructions do not apply to SCS employees at Beltsville or at any other field office.)

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In addition to SCS, three other agencies in the USDA have recently received defense ratings from the Civil Service Commission. These are Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Industry, and the entire Agricultural Adjustment Administration. The defense agencies in the Department now total seventeen.

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PRINTERS' INK

At the request of *Michigan Farmer*, Wash O'Brien, conservationist at Benton Harbor, Mich., wrote for early publication a series of four articles on "Planning the Farm for Soil and Water Conservation."

"Hold That Fire This Spring" Charles Dambach, regional technician, Dayton, Ohio, tells readers in an up-coming issue of *Ohio Conservation Bulletin*. For the same publication Dambach wrote another piece on "Field Borders."

"Formulas for the Transportation of Bed Load" by H. A. Einstein, hydraulic engineer at Greenville, S. C., in March *Proceedings, American Society of Civil Engineers*.

"Soil Erosion Control Appraised" by H. H. Bennett in March *Agricultural Leaders' Digest*.

"The Black Alder as a Pioneer Tree on Sand Dunes and Eroded Land" by Helmut Kohnke, soil scientist at Lafayette, Ind., in the March *Journal of Forestry*.

"The Magic Vine" by Forney Rankin, information specialist at Washington, in the March 15 issue of *Southern Agriculturist*.

"The Measurement of Structural Stability and Permeability and the Influence of Soil Treatments Upon These Properties" by R. B. Alderfer and F. G. Merkle, Region I soil technologist and Pennsylvania State College professor of soil technology, respectively, in the March *Soil Science*.

The article, "Why New Hampshire Needs A Soil Conservation Districts Law" by J. L. Haddock, K. E. Barraclough, and Ford S. Prince, which appeared in the February-March issue of *Soil Conservation*, has been reprinted in installment form in the *New Hampshire Farm Bureau News*. The *News* reprint has been dressed up with pictures of local farms.

LIBRARY EXTENDS HOURS

Ralph R. Shaw, Librarian of the Department, has announced that effective Monday, March 31, the new main reading room of the Department library, Room 1052, South Building, will be open from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Saturday hours will be the same as those for the rest of the Department, 8:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

The extension of hours has been made so that the library may be more useful to the entire staff of the Department, as well as to students and instructors in the Graduate School.

MORE PRINTERS' INK

"The Work of the Soil Conservation Service," USDA unnumbered publication, is a handy little bulletin just off the press which summarizes in very readable form the various activities of the Service.

"Soil Conservation Farmers" by Thomas R. Evans, junior biologist at Caledonia, Minn., in the April *Conservation Volunteer*.

"Water" by Frank B. Harper, information specialist at Spokane, Wash., in the March 13 issue of *Washington Farmer*.

"Livestock and Feeding--Keys to Soil Conservation," by R. R. Barker, Region 3 conservationist, in March 8 *Ohio Farmer*.

Forrest V. Durand, conservationist of Ripley, Tenn., writes of "Fire--Conservation's Worst Enemy" in the February *Kentucky Sportsman*.

The J. L. Lantow and E. L. Flory article on "Fluctuating Forage Production," which was included in the March issue of *The Cattleman*, first appeared in the December *Soil Conservation*.